

# Eastern Riverina Arts

# 2022 Annual Report



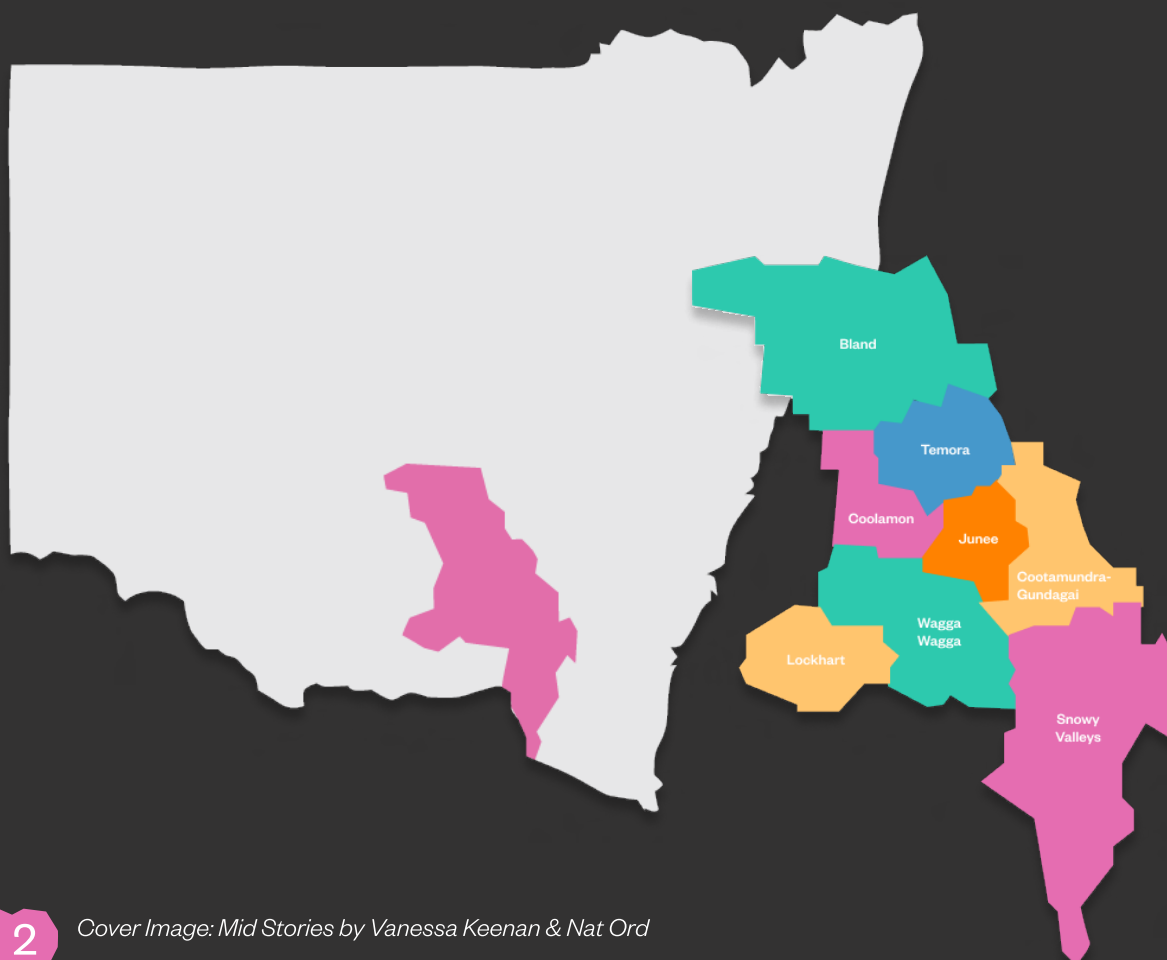
# About Eastern Riverina Arts

Eastern Riverina Arts (ERA) is a small organisation providing big opportunities to artists and creative people in our region.

Eastern Riverina Arts supports creative practitioners, stimulates creative activity and enterprise, and increases participation in the arts. We work in collaboration with the eight Councils of Bland, Coolamon, Cootamundra-Gundagai, Lockhart, Junee, Snowy Valleys, Temora and Wagga Wagga.

We believe that arts and culture contribute to the vibrancy, prosperity and wellbeing of communities across our region.

Eastern Riverina Arts is funded by the NSW Government through Create NSW. We are part of a statewide network of Regional Arts Development Organisations and are a member of Regional Arts NSW.



# Chair's welcome



Through 2022 we focused on establishing a solid foundation for what will be a period of high activity over the coming years.

We finalized our Strategic Plan (2021 – 2025), and in doing so confirmed our commitment to extend the capability of artists, creative organisations and communities to deliver purposeful creative activity across our region.

There is no better reflection of this than in the RENEW project which has continued to deliver very significant outcomes under the creative direction of Claire Harris.

In the second half of the year, we received the welcome news that ERA was awarded the opportunity to lease the former Ambulance Station in Wagga and establish a Creative Industries Hub. This is a unique venture, and we are truly excited by the potential it holds. It is Wagga Wagga City Council's vision that this building become a regional asset, and that vision is firmly embedded in our plans. We look forward to developing the facility and witnessing the benefits it brings across the region.

Our thanks to Create NSW for its continued support of regional arts through its annual funding program, and its collaboration with the statewide RADO network. We continued our association with Regional Arts NSW and drew benefit from its strengthening voice as a peak body in promoting and raising awareness of the significance of arts and creative practice in regional New South Wales.

I acknowledge and thank Executive Director, Tim Kurylowicz for his inspired leadership of the team that is ERA - Claire Harris, Brittany Hefren, and Ashleigh Adams. They are a team that delivers! We admire and benefit from their creativity, collaboration, and capability. Thank you!

My thanks to the Board of ERA, a very talented and experienced group of people who give freely and very generously of their time. Their steerage of ERA continues to be vitally important as we consider new directions and opportunities for the organisation. As her term on the Board ends, I would like to acknowledge Elise McGrath who has been a member since 2018. She is a strong voice for capacity building, access, and diversity, and is steadfastly committed to the regional focus of ERA. We are very grateful for her years of support and commitment to this organisation.

We appreciate the interest and backing of our member councils. We exist for you and your confidence in ERA supports us in delivering on our commitments.

**Anne Lowe**

Chair of the Eastern Riverina Arts Board of Directors

# Executive Director's Report



During 2022 we seized the opportunity to do things differently, and supported a vast community of creatives to re-emerge with panache.

With more than 750 separate instances of support and partnership provided to artists, community groups, creative businesses and councils, there wasn't a day in which our team wasn't actively engaged in the task of supporting vibrancy,

reconnecting communities and regrowing creative careers that had been savaged by the pandemic.

Amongst the busyness, we listened hard to the changing realities of our region: economic shifts, changes to audience behaviours, and the avalanche of disruption and opportunity in global streaming services. As we reviewed our Strategic Plan we realised very quickly that we are well placed to lead change, that now is not the time for timid plans. We set ourselves audacious goals, because creatives in our region deserve vigorous advocacy and exciting opportunities.

We think the Riverina region can be renowned for its artistic achievement, and that regionality need not be a barrier to local creatives exporting their work to the world. Every day we encounter new songs and stories, art and craft created under Wiradjuri skies.

As I write this in April 2023, we have secured funding to fit out and activate the Ambulance Station, and to initiate the Riverina Touring Network. That's a strong start towards our Strategic Plan's goals and it positions us to serve our region effectively and strategically for years to come.

These bold new projects will stretch and grow our team, and they bring opportunities and partnerships that will deliver for our whole region. There are a host of partnerships and programs in development that will nourish the local creative ecosystem for the long term.

I'm immensely proud to work within a team of people who work with such passion and commitment. My gratitude to our incredible board of directors is endless. And we are all in awe of, and privileged to support, the creativity that comes from Riverina people.

**Tim Kurylowicz**

Executive Director

# Connecting a vibrant and creative region

## Our core services in 2022

Every day, Eastern Riverina Arts staff are in the community, supporting the growth and development of our region's arts and creative industries. Here is a snapshot of some of that core activity.

During 2022, we provided at least 753 separate instances of advice and support to artists, community groups and councils, and wrote 37 letters of support. We supported or partnered on 21 council and community projects and gave face to face presentations to 6 of our Councils. We auspiced 13 projects in 2022.



We contributed to regional forums including business gatherings, and roundtables led by organisations like the Riverina Eastern Regional Organisation of Councils (REROC) and the Murrumbidgee Local Health District (MLHD).

We promoted over 390 opportunities and events and funding news for creatives in our region across our social media and monthly newsletter. At least 220 of these were events and projects created in our region.

We published 11 artist 'spotlight' features within the Creative Riverina social media platforms, promoting artists and creative practitioners from our region and across the service areas of Western Riverina Arts and South West Arts.



*Top: Board Member Freda Nichols speaks to The Hon. Ben Franklin MLC Image: Eastern Riverina Arts  
Left: Still from The Two Tribes written by Auntie Lorraine Tye and Susan Clancy and animated by Alice Peacock.  
Exhibited in the Wagga Wagga Art Gallery. Image: Supplied*



*Claire Harris (Creative Business Officer) & Anne Lowe (Chair) at Ambulance Station Media Announcement. Image: Eastern Riverina Arts*

# 2022 Highlights

We were able to support and contribute to so many outcomes across our region. Here are a few of our favourites:

- Wiradjuri Yadhaa art installation depicting Narrungdera Wiradjuri history/culture pre-settlement in Lockhart by artist Owen Lyons.
- Assisting in the commissioning of a Mural at RAAF base Forest Hill commemorating the Empire Air Training Scheme which saw thousands of airforce personnel trained in the Riverina in the lead up to WWII .
- Supporting the Snowy Valleys Sculpture Trail, a new and significant series of sculpture collections in Adelong, Batlow, Tumbarumba, Tooma and Tumbarumba.



- Bringing the ERA Mobile office to Gundagai and running a marketing for creatives workshop.
- Funding The Planet Man, an accessible podcast and theatre show by See Me Hear Me Theatre.
- Picnic at Hanging Rock, a women-led production by Freeroam Theatre
- Providing funding for an original animation of the Wiradjuri story Gobbagombalin and Pomingalarna by Aunty Lorraine Tye and Susan Clancy.
- Supporting A Coo-ee to Marie, a musical celebrating the life of Marie Narelle from 1870 Combaning, Temora to 1941 Chipping Norton, U.K. and home again.
- Regional Futures, a program of creative development and artist-led conversations on the opportunities and challenges presenting regional communities.
- The inaugural Art Festival on Ford, three days of pop up galleries, art experiences and displays in the main street shops and beautiful hall of Ganmain.



Left: Picnic at Hanging Rock.  
Image: Freeroam Theatre, Jack of Hearts  
Top: Juanita Mclauchlan Regional Futures Artist  
from our region. Image: Jack of Hearts





# Major Project: Renew Wagga

Renew Wagga breathes life into vacant city buildings and unlocks new opportunities for creative people in Wagga Wagga.

Using the Renew Australia framework, we facilitated short term usage of empty CBD spaces by artists and creative entrepreneurs to road test innovative business ideas and establish viable creative companies.

2022 saw the graduation of three participants of the Renew Wagga project. Established through the program in 2021, the Little Yellow House Gallery and Studio and Middlemost both progressed onto commercial leases to continue their businesses on Tompson Street. F.Stop Workshop took their business mobile, offering creative engagement programs to schools and communities across the region. It is a huge achievement to grow a business to sustainability and we are so proud of what they've each achieved!

Visual Artist and Art Therapy practitioner Elaine Camlin joined the Renew Wagga program by launching Unique State Art Space (U/S) in October 2022. Unique State offers workshops, social groups, 1:1 art therapy sessions and a retail space that stocks original prints from local artists and specialist art materials with a focus on bringing the love of printmaking home.

Over the course of the project, we consulted broadly with prospective creative businesses in our region, and came to realise that we need to make a broader range of commercial spaces available. It's not all retail.



This thinking led to the development of a detailed business case for a creative industries hub featuring artist studios, creative office suites, gallery and workshop spaces and meeting and digital studio spaces.

We made a successful bid to lease the historic Wagga Wagga Ambulance Station building from Wagga Council, and established a working partnership with the Wagga Wagga Business Chamber to ensure we deliver professional support and networking opportunities.

Linking arts and business development organisations, The Station will give entrepreneurs the perfect launchpad to experiment, collaborate and showcase innovation. Participants in the Station Creative Workspace office suites will formulate a business plan as part of their tenancy arrangement and will grow their businesses beyond The Station on an agreed timeframe.



Renew Wagga is supported by the NSW Government through the Stronger Country Communities Fund.

Strategic Plan  
2021-2025

Strategic Plan  
2021-2025

Eastern  
Riverina  
Arts

Eastern  
Riverina  
Arts



# A Bold New Plan

## Strategic Plan 2021-2025

After the challenges and pivots of Covid, and the project successes and learnings from ArtState Wagga, the Arbour Festival and the Lagoon project, we felt our previous Strategic Plan (2020-2024) no longer matched the challenges of today. During 2022 we rebuilt our strategic plan from the ground up, articulating a bold vision to increase our impact and capacity in coming years.

This new plan outlines an ambitious set of goals that will increase our impact across the region and support even stronger organisational performance into the future.

The plan is unapologetically ambitious in its intent to extend the capability of artists, creative organisations and communities to deliver purposeful creative activity across our region. It also outlines a pathway to further excel at governance, strategy and management, making ourselves indispensable to our members.

This is a plan designed to be implemented. We outlined three priority projects that embody the combined thrust of our goals in the short, medium and long term. These priority projects are the big picture ambitions we will strive to make real in coming years.

Each of these priority projects aligns with our values, delivers against multiple goals and increases the capacity and impact of our organisation.



### Project 1: Establish a Riverina Touring Network

The Eastern Riverina Arts region is packed with excellent venues run by dedicated teams and committees. All are constrained by the prohibitive cost of producing tours and programs to a single venue.

Starting as a funded project, and transitioning to a user-pays model, the regional touring project will coordinate tours of high-quality performing arts content to venues across our service region.

This project is also critical to unlocking the touring capacities of local creatives. It will enable professional performers locally to access a broader regional audience and develop tourable offerings.



### **Project 2: Attract funding for a permanent First Nations Cultural Development Officer**

We know that Arts and Cultural development takes time, and there has never been an ongoing dedicated arts and cultural workforce for First Nations creativity in our region.

The Indigenous Visual Arts Industry Support (IVAIS) Program offers a pathway to ongoing funding for a role of this type. Currently 3 of the 4 NSW recipients of this funding are based in other Regional Arts Development Organisations, and none are based in Southern NSW.

Eastern Riverina Arts will structure a partnership with the Wagga Wagga Art Gallery that fosters exhibition opportunities and market development for First Nations artists across our entire region. As well as regular work within the gallery, the officer will establish and lead programming and support across the ERA service region to maximise participation and industry development.

*Above: Artwork by Elaine Camlin  
Image: Eastern Riverina Arts*

### **Project 3: Establish a Creative Industries Hub in Wagga Wagga**

Eastern Riverina Arts will establish and manage a significant cultural facility in Wagga Wagga, providing affordable spaces for artists, creative businesses and digital creatives.

The hub will leverage the support of business development organisations and will have a special focus on fostering a local digital creative industry sector.

The facility will provide affordable artist studios and suites to digital creatives, and spaces for meetings, events, exhibition and performance.

At the right scale, and with the right partnerships in place, a Creative Industries Hub will offer affordable services and spaces for creative activity while generating income to offset the staffing and workforce loads placed upon organisational resources.



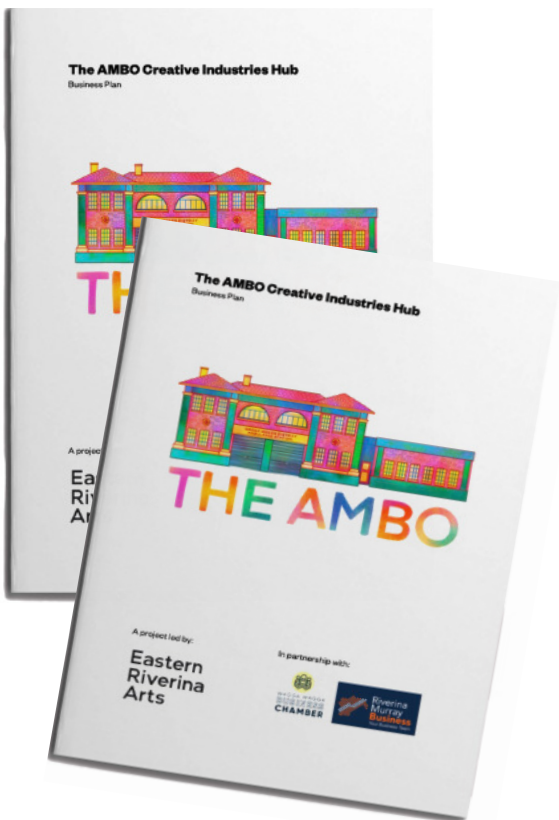
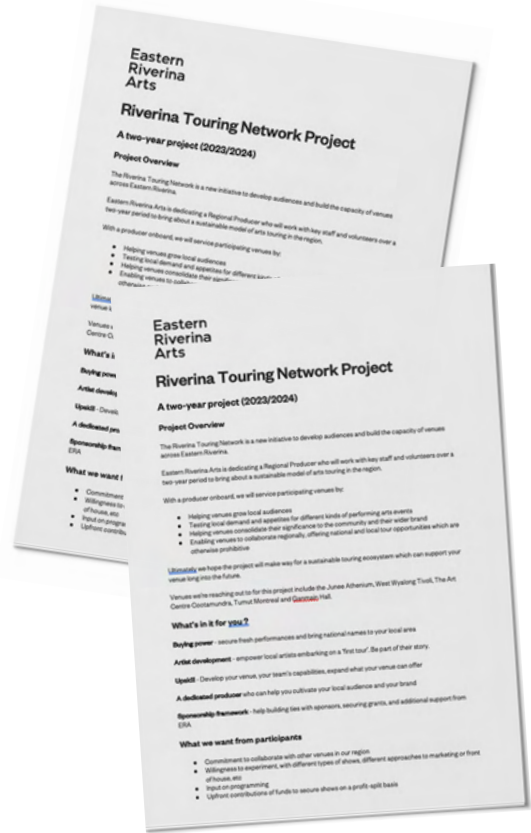
*AusCo Custodianship Program.  
Image: Eastern Riverina Arts*

# Plan Progress in 2022

After years of planning, we put in our EOI to Wagga Wagga City Council to take over the Historic Ambulance Station on Johnston St in line with priority project 3, to Establish a Creative Industries Hub in Wagga Wagga.

We received news that our EOI was successful and began designing the project in more detail and applying for funding. We developed applications for the fit-out of the building through Create NSW's Creative Capital program, and for a diverse suite of programming and partnerships through the Stronger Country Communities (SCCF) fund.

With the news that these applications were successful, we launched expressions of interest for artist studios and creative office suites in the building with the plan to open in the first half of 2023.



We also made significant headway towards priority Project 1, the Riverina Touring Network. We developed funding applications through the Regional Arts Fund and Create NSW's projects and, with both applications successful we will commence this 2 year project in early 2023.

After Covid, it's so important to get local venues activated again, using the performing arts for what they do best - bringing communities together!

We look forward to working with member councils and community groups to find a model that works for all across our region.

# Financial Performance

Eastern Riverina Arts continues to deliver exceptional value to its member Councils. We have kept administrative costs low and increased our service levels through efficiency and good governance.

Eastern Riverina Arts amplifies its members' investments by seeking funding for strategic projects, boosting employment and stimulating the creative economy in our region.

In 2022, ERA was successful in securing over \$900,000 in grant funds over and above our core funding and member contributions, which will support ambitious regional projects in the coming years. This funding will support touring performance activity, develop cultural facilities and their teams, and employ artists and cultural workers across our region.

You can read our full audited 2022 financial report at [easternriverinaarts.org.au/documents](http://easternriverinaarts.org.au/documents)



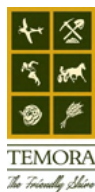
*Progress on the Urquandilly Water Tower  
Mural by Magga-born artist Damien Mitchell  
Photo: Urquandilly Progress Association*



Renew Wagga Launch. Photo: Brittany Hefren

# Acknowledgements

Eastern Riverina Arts acknowledges the financial and in-kind support of its member Councils



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